Memorandum from Judge Vowell

To: All Circuit and District Judges, Tenth Judicial Circuit

Re: Chief Justice's Administrative Order of April 12, 2011

Date: April 13, 2011

Judges, Clerks and all Court Employees:

You have received a copy of the Chief Justice's Administrative Order addressing the issues caused by the reduction in court funding for the remainder of this fiscal year and the fiscal year

beginning October 1, 2011. It goes without saying that the Chief Justice is the head of the Judicial

Branch of government and we will always follow her instructions. However, since some of her

remedial methods are directed to the discretion of the Presiding Judge, I will go through each

paragraph of her Order.

1. The Presiding Judge is granted the authority to close the offices and courtrooms of the

Courts to the public on Friday of each week. Since our employees and staff are salaried, there would

be no reduction in their pay and all employees would still be expected to work their regular schedule.

At this time, the Jefferson County Courts will remain open to the public when the Courthouse is

open, five days a week, eight hours per day. If the paper work should begin to fall behind because

of the reduction in the number of employees, we may revisit this issue in the future.

2. Since we will not be closed to the public on Fridays, this paragraph does not apply.

3. We are directed to reduce the number of jury weeks in civil cases by one-half and in all

criminal cases by one-fourth. Since we have one jury pool for both the civil and the criminal

dockets, we must reduce our jury weeks by approximately one-half. Our jurors have already been

summoned through the week of May 9, 2011, so the reductions will begin after that week. We have

reduced the number of jury weeks for the remainder of this year from 13 to seven and for the 2012

FY from 30 to 15.

Attached is the revised schedule for jury cases. Each judge will need to re-set cases which are scheduled for a jury trial on a week for which the jury has been canceled. If the financial situation should improve, we will restore needed jury weeks.

- 4. In compliance. We have previously ordered all attorneys who practice in our courts to register with AlaFile. Almost all have complied. If a JA finds that attorneys are not registered and that they are required to mail copies of Orders, please let my office know about it. This will result in substantial savings in clerical time and postage.
- 5. In compliance. We have been asking our jurors to waive compensation and travel expenses since the last crisis and will continue to do so. About 20% of the jurors are waiving their right to be paid, resulting in substantial savings.
 - 6. In compliance. We are already using a juror call-in system.
- 7. Because filing in the Bessemer Cut-off is jurisdictional, we cannot close the Bessemer Courthouse.
- 8. This paragraph deals with Juvenile Probation Officers (JPO) and will be addressed by Family Court Presiding Judge Huff and me.
- 9. In compliance. We are carefully considering affidavits of hardship and the taxation of court costs.

If you have any suggestions as to how additional savings can be achieved, please let me know. I personally thank all of you for your patience and understanding during these trying times. We must all do everything we can to fulfill our duty to the public. Please take every opportunity you have to let your Alabama representatives and senators know of the urgent need for additional funding for the judicial system.